A

SERMON

Preached for the

FUNERAL

of the Honourable Faithful Servant of Jesus Christ

NATHANAEL SMITH

LATE OF

Malmesbury

IN THE

COUNTY of WILTS

WITH

An Account of his LIFE, in an Epistle to

Dr. ANNESLY.

NEW-CHANDLER, M.D.

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To the Reverend and Pious

Dr. SAMUEL ANNESLY.

SIR,

THE design of this Application to you, is not your Praise; it were the greatest Absurdity for me to attempt it; for all that know you and me, know you to be much above my Character; your Works praise you better than my Pen can. My Intention is a sincere and grateful Acknowledgment of the kindness I have received at your Hands, for which I stand much indebted to you. I would gladly bring a greater and better Thank-offering, were it in my Power; but this being the best, I hope it will be accepted; 'tis a Sermon preached for the Funeral of my Father-in-Law, whose virtuous good Life has done more to preserve his Memory, than this Printed Discourse can do to perpetuate it. He was a Man eminently Religious, and very useful, a sincere vigorous pursuer of Holiness in his whole Course. I do seriously think, that if ever any man in the World made Religion his Business, he did; he was (so far as I could make Observation) Religious in every thing, allowances for insuperable Frailties being made. In his Closet he was frequent, and very serious, humble, and importunate in Prayer; if ever any Man prayed in season and out of

season, he did; early and late did he wrestle with God for himself, his Family, the Nation, and the Church of God: how early in the Morning have I heard him pleading with God for this poor Sinful Nation, when questionless he thought none in the House was awake! Many an hours Sleep hath he denied himself of, for the sake of private Prayer; many a cold Morning before Day hath he been upon his Knees without Fire or Candle, to do what in him lay to stave off Judgments from the poor Kingdom; how would he stir up himself, rouse up his heart, and expostulate with his God! When I first saw him in his Coffin, I could not forbear saying, The Chariots of *Israel*, and the Horsemen thereof! *In his private Retirements he was wonderfully free and bold, yet not rude or irreverent in his Expressions.*

In his Family he was a constant zealous Worshipper of God, Morning and Evening; no Business whatever could prevail with him either to omit or curtail his set solemn Family-Duties; a thing which I fear but few Professors may pretend to. God's Word was read, his Name call'd on, his Praises sung, as often in his Family, as perhaps in the best Families in England; *I think but few Families so often mourned apart and together as his. I have reason to hope, that all his Children now living will bless God in Heaven for him. He was not (as too many Professors are) chiefly careful to raise his Childrens Fortunes, but to save their Souls, and therefore was truly Watchful over them, and Faithful to them, as in the matter of Instruction, so also of Reproof and Correction. And here I may safely add, That he was one of the faithfullest Reprovers of Sin, that ever I knew. If in some Cases his Zeal outran his Discretion, wise Men will easily pardon it, as being a mistake on the right hand. He was heartily concerned for the Glory of God,*

God, and could not endure to see or hear him dishonoured; and therefore, tho he exposed himself to danger, he would speak without regarding the Person, or fearing the Issue.

In the Congregation, he was a Devout, Serious Hearer; he loved God's Word, and honoured the Ministry; I have good reason to believe, that he usually heard the Word Preached, in a very deep Humility and Self-denial: He took great pains to prepare his heart to receive the Word; and when he had heard it, he was diligent to keep it; and to that end, he would often repeat it in his Family, to his Wife and Children. I am confident it was his earnest Desire, to be in all things subject to the Law of God; for he was never offended at Plain-dealing, but loved to have his heart ripp'd up, and his sins pointed at: He rejoiced in opportunities of drawing nigh to God; the Sabbaths were his Delight; and I judge he was one of the most strict Observers of them. He had a great Veneration for the Ministry; I am well satisfied he hath done as much to maintain the Faithful Preaching of the Word in the Place he lived in, for many Years together, as most of his Ability in England. *I could give a particuldr account here, but that the Modesty of his good Widow, my dear Mother-in-Law, forbids it. He was a Dissenter from the Church of* England, *and usually attended the Ministry of* Nonconformists; *but an hearty Lover, and ready Hearer of all Sober, Orthodox, well-living* Conformists; *a thing, I judge, very commendable, as savouring of a Catholick Spirit, and proceeding from true Christian Charity.*

In his Business he was Diligent, but not Solliciteus. I never saw a man commit his ways to God, with a greater Confidence and Trust. He was industriously careful to be religiously careless. He took indeed true pains to

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get this World; but I think in my conscience, very much without vexatious thoughtfulness in the pursuit; raising delight in the getting, or sinking grief for the loss thereof. In his dealings he was punctual and just; true to his word, and conscionable in his ways; he was careful rather to receive, than do wrong, as many in the City and Country can safely testifie. He lived not in Pleasure, but was ridgidly Temperate; and for the sake of Religious Duties, did very much deny himself in Eating and Drinking.

He was truly Charitable, and ready to relieve the distressed; he thought it his Duty, and made it his Practise to lay up for Charitable and Pious Uses, as God had blessed him; and what he laid up, he counted no more his own, than a bag of his Neighbour's Money that might be left with him; so grateful was doing good to him, that he not only did it chearfully himself, but rejoiced exceedingly, to observe others like-minded. He was mightily affected with those that harboured the French Protestants; and sent a Thousand Prayers to Heaven for them: The Concerns of the Church lay near his heart; and had constantly a room in his Prayers.

He was constantly Serious; he seemed to carry a dread of the Majesty of God continually upon his Spirit; and would be frequently putting in something of God, wherever he was, or whomsoever he was conversing with; and that which crown'd all, it, he was profoundly humble, as sensible of his own Nothingness, as most men that ever I knew. In a word, as was his Name, so was he, an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile.

Reverend Sir,

I cannot but presume, That you will readily grant, upon a Supposition that this Account is true, (as God knoweth

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it is), That he was a very good man; and consent, That his Name should be kept alive, and his good Example recorded for others Imitation. For this End, I have adventured thus to appear in Publick, by Printing this well-meaning poor Discourse; which I humbly lay at your Feet, as a Token of my unfeigned Gratitude for your undeserved Love to me. The Lord recompence you; Bless this Essay to the Souls of them that shall read it; and incline your Heart to Pray for

SIR,

London, *May* 8.
1691.

Your Obliged,

Humble Servant,

HENRY CHANDLER.

A

JOB I. 21.

——The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

THE Words acquaint us with the incomparable good Temper of Soul that Religious *Job* possessed in the midst of an unparallell'd Affliction. His case was thus: A most tremendous Hurricane of Providence had overturned and swept away almost all his earthly Comforts; his Oxen and Asses were seiz'd by the *Sabeans*, his Sheep destroyed by Lightning, his Camels carried away by the *Caldeans*, his Servants slain; and which was worst of all, his dearer Children unhappily taken away in the midst of their Mirth; and the terrible Advice hereof brought him in Parcels by Messengers one upon the heels of another in one day. A thing so dreadful, that at first sight one would think it was a Conspiracy of Providence to make as great and dismal Destruction amongst his Graces within, as it did amongst his Goods and Chattels, and Children without; and indeed this was the design of Satan, but not of God, as will appear to the serious Considerer of the meek

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and composed Remark he makes upon the Providence in the Words of my Text, *The Lord*, &c. where he doth not only implicitly acquit God of all Unrighteousness or Cruelty, but expressly praise and bless him. A frame of heart as signally and wonderfully holy, as God's Providence was dreadful and astonishing.

I shall consider this Practice of *Job*, not only as a matter of History, but as an example of Piety, proposed to us by the Holy Ghost for our imitation. And then they afford us this Observation.

Doct. *Every Christian is indispensibly obliged to bless the afflicting taking God.*

I shall endeavour to give you the Sense, manifest the Truth, and shew you the Usefulness of this Doctrine.

In the Explication of the Doctrine, I shall first prevent some mistakes, and shew what is not the Sense of it: As,

(1.) This Doctrine doth not mean, that we should love our Afflictions for their own sake; I humbly conceive, that this is impracticable, and our Religion obliges us not to the Practice of things absolutely impossible, as is the loving any Evil as Evil; Pain, Loss, Poverty, Sickness or Death, *cannot* be loved for themselves; 'tis repugnant even to innocent Nature; Christ Jesus himself could not practice it, as we are taught by that Expression, *If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.*

Malum qua malum non est appetibile.

Matth. 26. 39.

Neither,

Neither, (2.) Doth this Doctrine designedly plead for a Stoical impenetrableness, as tho it were a Virtue to be insensible of, and unconcerned at the Afflictions of Providence; this is very alien from the Sense of the Holy Ghost, the Frame of *Job*, or the Design of this Sermon: As the first is impracticable; this is inhumane, if not impracticable too; for by the way, I think as few of the *Stoicks* arrived to their admired *Apathy*, as Quakers to their pretended Perfection.

However, to entertain the Rebukes of Providence with a moderate proportioned sorrowful Resentment, I account virtuous and commendable. *Job* himself expresseth somewhat of this nature, by rending his Mantle, shaving his Head, and falling down upon the ground. And God teacheth us this Lesson, by creating us with a Disposition to grieve when his Providences call for it, for God maketh nothing in vain; then what need of Water and Sluices, if the one must never run, nor the other ever be drawn?

But affirmatively, the Doctrine doth intend,

(1.) When God afflicts us by taking away from us, we must carefully prevent or suppress all quarrelling Discontent; we are bound to see that there be no Rebels in our Hearts that find fault with God, or that rise up and charge him foolishly; 'tis our Duty to keep the King of Heaven's Peace in our Souls at such times; to watch carefully againgst Tumults and Mutinies in our Hearts, which are ever and anon apt to rise at the least Provocation imaginable; yea many times, when there is none given at all. Here I conceive are two things to be minded.

(1.) In all our Afflictions we must take heed, that we do not rashly and proudly call our God to account concerning his Providences; for he is infinitely above us, and *who dare say unto him, What doest thou?* If we cannot understand the Wisdom or Usefulness of his Methods, we must silently *adore, where we cannot fathom*, and patiently wait till he unvail them. The Examination of a God is not the Province of a Creature; though we may humbly enquire for our own Instruction, yet we may not proudly ask for Examination. This is more than his Angels ever durst pretend to.

Job 9. 12.

Watson.

(2.) We must be as careful, that in our Judgment made upon his Providence, we reflect not upon his Attributes. In the Language of Scripture, that we do not attribute Folly to God; we may not in *any case* think that God hath forgot himself, or acts unlike himself; for if we should, 'twould be nothing less than speaking Blasphemy in our Hearts, whose Words are as audible to God as those of our Mouths. If I mistake not, the Religious *Aaron* lived both these Particulars, when being afflicted severely by the Lord in the Death of his two Sons, *He held his peace*; his profound silence loudly speaking a Resolution in him, not to examine nor impeach the Great and Holy God.

Lev. 10. 3.

(2.) Our blessing the afflicting taking God, includeth a readiness in us to proclaim the Righteousness and Justice of all his afflictive Dispensations. In all our Distresses and Sorrows, 'tis our Duty to think and acknowledge that God hath not wronged us, by exceeding the demerits of our Sins; but that we truly deserve

deserve the strokes we smart under, be they never so many; thus the poor afflicted Church of the *Jews* acknowledgeth, and so will every gracious Soul; and thus doth *Job* himself, *If I justify my self, mine own mouth shall condemn me: If I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.* A gracious heart will justify God, tho by so doing he unavoidably throws dirt in his own face; he desires to honour God by Confession, tho it be to his own disparagement; as he rejoyces to see the Sun rise, tho it put out the Moon, and all the Stars.

Ezra 9. 13. Job 9. 20.

(3.) Our blessing the afflicting taking God, includeth our absolute Subjection to his Sovereign will. Here be two things.

(1.) 'Tis our duty to believe that God *ought* to have an unlimitted Dominion over us and ours; to use and dispose as seemeth good to him; this is an acknowledging of God's right. Thus *Job* confesseth, *Behold he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, what doest thou?* Which words describe to us not only God's irresistible Power, but his unquestionable Authority; *none can, none ought* to oppose him; now in our Afflictions especially, we should firmly believe this, That God *may* take away our Yoke-fellows, Children, Health, Estates, or what he please, from us; 'tis his *Right* to dispose of us and ours.

Job 9. 12.

(2.) 'Tis our duty freely and fully to consent, that God *shall* exercise this Dominion over us and ours. The first Particular I told you, was an acknowledging of God's right. This second, is a rendring him his due. The one we learn by the Light of Nature; the other is only performed by the help of Special Grace.

We

We ſhould unreſervedly devote all our Comforts to his Sovereign diſpoſal, lay all our Enjoyments, by ſincere reſignation, at his feet, as the Diſciples did the Price of their Eſtates at the Feet of the Apoſtles. When God cometh for any one of thy Comforts, 'tis thy Duty, Chriſtian, like *Araunah* the *Jebuſite*, to give like a King, unto thy King the Lord of Hoſts; thou ſhouldeſt ſay to God, as he to *David*, *Let my Lord take, and offer up to his own will, what ſeemeth good unto him.* Thus the good old *Eli* replieth to *Samuel*, *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good.* In which Words, he doth not only ſubmit to the ſlaughter of his Sons, and the rejection of his Family from the Prieſthood for ever (a terrible Providence) but alſo ſignifies, that if he had yet another Comfort left, the reſignation of which would glorifie God, that alſo was heartily at his ſervice. Lord, how little of this is lived by the generality of profeſſing Chriſtians! Yet this is our Duty; and queſtionleſs this was holy *Job*'s practice, and it ſhould be ours daily. When God is taking away any of our Comforts, we ſhould be ſo far from wreſting them out of God's hands, that we ſhould moſt unfeignedly offer them all.

Acts 4. 35.

2 *Sam.* 24. 23.

1 *Sam.* 3. 18.

4. Our bleſſing the afflicting taking God, includeth our heedful converſing with the Divine Goodneſs and Mercy, that ever manageth all our Afflictions; I intreat you, let this be carefully conſidered. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto ſuch as keep his covenant, and his teſtimonies.* Even the frowns of his Providence as well as the ſmiles, theſe are not only juſt and righteous, but merciful and faithful; yea (the Lord help our unbelief) mercy and truth in the abſtract. Now God

Pſalm 25. 10.

God expects that we firmly believe it, carefully obſerve it, and gratefully acknowledge it.

1. That we firmly believe it: God never deceiveth us, therefore we ſhould never miſtruſt him; God cannot be deceived, he is too wiſe for that; he cannot deceive, he is too juſt for that: Therefore when God tells us, that however he deals with us, he is ever mindful of, and true to his Word in every Providence, we muſt honour him by believing; we ſhould ſay, O my ſoul, though thy God taketh away this, and that, and the other comfort, yet 'tis in love, mercy and truth, for he hath promiſed, he will never carry it otherwiſe towards thee.

2. That we carefully obſerve it; That we endeavour to *taſte* and *ſee* that the Lord is good in his afflicting us. God *hath ſaid*, he will be good to us in every Providence, therefore we ſhould believe it; God *is* good to us in every Providence, therefore we ſhould obſerve and ſee it. 'Tis as really a fault to ſhut our eyes, as our ears. When God afflicts us, we obſerve his anger, tell his ſtrokes, and pore upon his ſeverity, but neglect to heed his mercy in the Providence; but this is our fault; we ſhould as impartially ſtudy the uſefulneſs, as the pain of the Affliction: A wiſe Patient will as much conſider the wholſome tendency of his Phyſick, as its griping operation. *Pſal.* 34. 8.

(3.) That we gratefully acknowledge it. 'Tis our duty to thank and praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs to us, in afflicting of us: This indeed is difficult, but 'tis as glorious when done; 'tis a Duty, and muſt be done. In *every* thing we muſt give thanks, *1 Theſ.* 5. 18.

for

for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus, concerning us. What, may some say, must we give thanks
Eph. 5. 20. for our sorrows, griefs and pressures? must we thank God for stripping, scourging and wounding us? I answer, so saith the Scripture, giving thanks always for *all things* unto God, *&c.* You'll be ready to say, this is an hard Lesson, who can learn it? You, by the grace of God, quickly, if you consider and believe the reason offer'd, in above mentioned 1 *Thes.* 5. *This is the will of God in Christ Jesus, concerning you:* where I conceive the *Apostle* would have us know, that every Providence, the adverse, as well as prosperous, is the gracious management of a God in Covenant, proceeding not from meer justice, but love and faithfulness; and that therefore the Saints are as much obliged to praise God for the one, as for the other; because their true interest is equally promoted by both; as a man is as truly beholden to his Chyrurgion that cuts off his gangreen'd Leg, as to him that lends a Fillet to help bind it up. I cannot therefore but admire the profoundness of *Calvin*'s Judgment, who thinks that *Chrysostome* did not fully reach the Sence of the Holy Ghost in this Text; who, to these Words, *This is the will of God*; adds only, *Nempe ut gratias agamus*: and therefore gives a more full account of them in the following Words. *Ego pleniorem sensum contineri puto his verbis, quod talis sit erga nos Dei affectus in Christo ut in afflictionibus quoque largam habeamus materiam gratias agendi*; God is most certainly kind and good to his people when he afflicts them; sure then in point of gratitude, they can do no less than acknowledge it to him and others.

(1.) To

(1.) To him. Every kindness deserves thanks: Afflictions are God's Kindnesses to the Saints, and therefore they should thank him for them. We thank God for our Food; what hinders, but that we should thank him for our Physick too? A good Man once put up a Bill to me to this effect, *Sir, my Family is sorely visited with Sickness, I desire you would bless God on my behalf.* I read the Note, and being amazed at the unusualness and singularity of it, did not acquaint the People with the Contents of it; but (knowing who wrote it) afterwards asked the Person what he meant? Whether he had not mistaken? He told me, No, he thought himself obliged to the Good God, that he would take so much notice of him, as to afflict him for his good. When I heard that, I as much wondered at his extraordinary Piety, as at his unusual Bill. This is little practised, but is certainly the Duty of all the Saints.

(2) To others. The Holy *David* records the Mercy of an afflicting God, and proclaims his Praise to all the World, *In very faithfulness hast thou afflicted me. 'Twas well for me, that I was afflicted, that I might learn thy precepts.* And without dispute, 'tis what honours God, and would edify his People. Thus I have given you the Sense of the Doctrine, the sum of which take in these few Words: Psal. 119. 71, 75.

'Tis the indispensible Duty of every Christian, when afflicted of God, composedly to bear his Hand, readily to submit to his Will, carefully to vindicate his Justice, firmly to believe, heedfully to observe, and thankfully to acknow-

ledge his mercy and faithfulness in the Providence.

The next thing in order, is to shew the Truth of this Doctrine, which were altogether needless, but that we are naturally purblind, and cannot see the things of our Duty, unless by many Arguments, Reasons, and Similitudes, they be brought very near to us. Otherwise, what needs any Arguments to prove that we must not repine at, or reflect upon God? That we must not rebel against, or be ungrateful to him? The thing may be clearly seen at a great distance by its own light; but we have bad Eyes, and they must be helped. I shall therefore offer some things to put us past doubt, *That we ought, &c.*——

(1.) However we are afflicted, 'tis certain, we should not murmur, because we are not injured. Remember here what hath been plainly hinted already; 'tis not forbidden that we cry out. God that made us Men, ne're obliged us to be Blocks; that that he requires, is this, that in our complaints we find no fault with *Him*, make no dishonourable Reflections upon *Him*. The word rendred *complain*, in *Lament*. 3. 39. doth most usually signify *murmuring*; is so rendred in the Margin of some Bibles, and I judg in that Sence to be understood in that Text. Surely we may cry under God's Rod, but we must not cry against his Hand; for all that he brings upon us, is justly brought upon us; and why should we reproach him that worketh Righteousness? Sith God dealeth fairly (and he cannot do otherwise) we have no reason to talk foul

foul against him. 'Tis time enough to find fault when we are wrong'd; till then all murmuring is unreasonable, whatever we suffer. Hence by the way we may observe, That as there is no just ground for it on Earth, so neither is there in Hell; for there God *wrongs* not the damned Wretches, how severely soever he handles them.

(2.) 'Tis as plain, that in all our Afflictions we ought readily to proclaim the Righteousness of God, holding our peace; and refraining from discontent and murmuring is not enough, we ought to open our mouths and praise God, even for his righteousness and truth in afflicting us; because there can never be any reason given why God should lose his Glory, because we have sinned away our Comfort.. Honouring God is a Duty, as we are reasonable Creatures, capable of observing and proclaiming the glorious Perfections of his Nature and Works; and not only as we are humoured, pleased, and accommodated with the good things of this Life; or else the rich, healthy, and prosperous only, were obliged to do him Honour, which we are so far from granting, that no Man in his Wits will ever desire that we should.

(3.) Nor is it less clear, That in all such Providences we ought readily to submit to his will, because otherwise we are

Rebels against our King.
False to our Covenant.
Enemies to our true Interest.

(1.) We are *Rebels against our King*. I would hope it were needless here to insist upon the Right God hath to manage us, and all our concerns: He is our Lord and Sovereign upon the most indisputable accounts that can be; he is our Creator, we have our Being from him; our Benefactor, we have our Mercies from him; he made us, he maintains us, and now can there possibly be any reason given, why he should not govern us, or dispose of us? I think 'tis past all doubt, that God is our rightful absolute Lord, and if so, then surely we ought to obey, and comply with his Will in all things; and when we do not, we Rebel against him.

(2.) We are *false to our Covenant*. We have *promised* to submit to his Will; we have more than once or twice avouched the Lord for our Master and King, and given up our selves to him, to be ruled, and managed by him as he shall see good; we have renounced our own Wills, and taken his Will for our Law, and therefore *in point of Fidelity* we are bound readily to comply with the Will of an afflicting God; if we do not, we are guilty of most vile falseness and perfidy.

(3.) We are *Enemies to our true Interest*. Which evidently lies in our being managed by an infinite Wisdom, Truth, and Goodness, and such is God. He that had rather govern himself, than be governed by his God, is (without Exception) a Fool, and an Enemy to himself. However God deals with his People, 'tis clear as the Sun, they cannot be better managed; for if any can manage them better, it must be by reason of more wisdom, and more goodness; and good Lord! where should they have it? Can the Rivers have

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more water than the Sea? Or have they any but what they have from the Sea?

As to the Fourth Particular, I judge, that the Text in the *Ephesians*, and the other in the *Thessalonians*, do sufficiently prove it: I shall therefore pass to the Uses, which shall be Five Inferences, and One Exhortation.

Application. Is it the Duty, *&c.* Then (1.) This helps to discover, that the generality of Professors of the Christian Religion, are very great scandals to the Religion they Profess; or that Christianity is very little lived by the generality of its Professors, who can hardly arrive to a serious thankfulness in the midst of their Peace and Plenty; and when at any time they are tryed by Afflictive Providences, are so far from an Heavenly well pleasedness with the Wise and Good will of God, that their foolish Souls discover not only discontent, but Disloyalty and Rebellion against the Sovereign of their Lives and Mercies: What the Devil falsly insinuated against *Job* 1. *ch.* 9, 10. he may truly say of most Christians, *viz.* That they serve God for his good things; their love to God is a mercenary base love; when God is Loved and Praised only or chiefly for the sake of his Creatures wherewith he benefits them; and this is apparent, in that many Persons can hardly find matter of Praise to God any longer than his Sun shines, and his Showers fall on them. When God hath done for a season pouring down his favours upon them in that large measure as heretofore, they have done also Praising of Him, till the next convenient opportunity. If God turn his hand, they can turn their

tongues

tongues from Thanksgiving, to Quarrelling; from Praise, to Discontent, if not Blasphemy and Cursing. You may assure your selves, this is quite another thing than true Religion. For

(2.) This Doctrine plainly sheweth us, That 'tis our Duty to Love God for himself, and all Creatures in Subordination to him: For here you see the Religious Edomite *Job* Loving and Praising his God, when he had hardly a Creature-comfort left him to converse pleasantly with; and what should hinder? He good man loved the Creature, but as a step by which he may ascend to the Creator, and if that were took away, he needed it not, if the Lord would stoop to his Soul, or lift up his Soul to himself. And indeed, if we see any more than a *subordinate relative usfulness* in the Creature, 'tis because the Devil hath set up a false light in our Souls; and if we delight in the creature principally for any other reason, than because they help us to Know and Love God, we prostitute our Souls to an Idol. If it be our Duty to Love and Praise God when he strips us of Creature-Comforts, then surely we are to Love Him for Himself, and His Creatures in a direct subordination to Him; when we have them, we should rejoyce more that God is Glorified by His Bounty to us, than that we are accommodated; and when he takes them away, we should rejoyce that he is Glorified by His Sovereingty over us, though we be not accommodated.

(3.) This teacheth us, That there is no *such worth* in Creature-enjoyments as we usually imagine: That all things that God hath made, are very good, having the footsteps of Divine Power, Wisdom, and Goodness imprint-

imprinted on them, is paſt all queſtion, and I readily grant; and that there is a ſuitable agreeing convenicy in the good things of this life to mans neceſſities in this Animal ſtate, I cannot deny; but that the creatures in themſelves, and with reſpect to Man, are leſs good than prejudiced Sinners do uſually conceive, is certain from Scripture and daily experience, in as much as the one frequently tells us, they are all vanity, and the other as frequently finds it ſo. Yet men purſue them (I mean Meat, Drink, Eſtates, Yokefellows, *&c.*) as furiouſly as if they were undone if they had them not; and enjoy them ſo extravagantly and abuſively as if they had no other good to ſpend their Souls upon; which if it were true, God would never make it our Duty to part with them with rejoycing, as he doth in this Text, and in the 1 *Theſ.* 5. 16, 18. That there is leſs good in the Creature therefore than we uſually think, is evident from this, that it may be our intereſt to be without them, and our Duty to Bleſs God when he takes them away; O that this may abide for ever upon your hearts!

(4.) This ſhews, That 'tis the trueſt Wiſdom to get an heart mortified to the World, I mean to have one's Soul poſſeſs an even Spiritual temper in all revolutions of Providence, ſo as not to be charmed or inveigled with the delights of Proſperity, or be diſturbed or grieved at the little annoyances of adverſity. Muſt we Bleſs and Praiſe and Love God, when he takes away our comforts? then ſurely 'tis our Wiſdom not to be exceſſively pleaſed when he gives them. 'Tis certainly a Vanity to Love the Preſence of that much, which with chearfulneſs we muſt bid farewell the next time the Giver calls for it; he lives moſt rationally,

tionally, that lives most soberly with respect to Creature-Comforts; because as he best relisheth the Sweetness of them, and most perfectly knows the true tast of them, so he is best fitted to manage his Duty at their departure. If a man with *Micah*, 18 *Judges* 24. Converts his Gold and Silver into a God, no wonder if he run crying like a mad man after the Idol, when the true God takes it away. Whereas the Spiritual Heavenly Soul can easily part with it, because he knew it, and comparatively despised it before.

(5.) This shews us, that 'tis an Evil to *indulge* a Grief at the loss of Earthly comforts. I have told you already, that the Text doth not prescribe a stupid Stoicism. But to admit a Grief too near, or entertain it too long for any Creature, is unbecoming a Servant of Christ, and a Professor of Religion; *to sorrow as those without hope*, as in 1 *Thes.* 4. 13. is expressed, is certainly a very great Sin, let the loss be what it will; when persons sorrow is so great, that it breaks their Spirits, unfits them for Communion with God, and destroys their Health; when they Grieve as if they were undone, *&c.* this is certainly very evil; or else when persons have never done Grieving, but like foolish *Jonah* think they do well to be angry with God, yea to be angry to the death, as in *Jon.* 3. 9. this is Horrid and Abominable. How far are such persons from the right frame! Sinners take but little notice of this thing; but certainly where this frame doth prevail, it bespeaks a great deal of untamed pride in a Person; and signifies that there is very little Grace, if any at all in such a Soul. A Godly Soul may be surprized, and or ever he is aware, carried far into an extravagant passion of Grief, but usually is somewhat composed after the first storm; but a long tedious fixed

Grief

Grief for the loſs of any Creature, ſhews either that the Soul never knew any thing greater than his Creature-comforts; or elſe that he is very much ſunk into a Spiritual diſtemper, and for the preſent hath forgot the reliſh of Divine Conſolation.

I now paſs to the laſt Uſe, and it is this.

(2.) Carefully endeavour to diſpoſe your ſelves to entertain Afflictive Providences, as you ought, by conceiving congruouſly of them aforehand. My Brethren, You are in a good meaſure ready for the bittereſt Providence, and fitted to receive the ſaddeſt Revolution whatever, if you habitually conceive aright of an afflicted ſtate: I mean, if you uſually hit the nature and end of ſuch Providences in your apprehenſions about them. The Evils of this life, as they are managed for the Godly, are not by far ſo dreadful when fully underſtood, as at firſt ſight they did appear; certainly the reaſon why good Chriſtians tremble at the approach of Temporal Evils, is becauſe they do not know them; as heretofore the Poor Diſciples cryed out, when Chriſt came on the Sea to them, as if a deſtroying Devil had been coming aboard the Ship; whereas when they knew who 'twas, one of them dares go upon the waters that he may meet him. Many times a Godly Soul looketh upon an approaching Calamity with Conſternation and Terrour, that he entertains with Profit, and reviews with unſpeakable Pleaſure; and ſaith with *David Pſal.* 119. 71. *'Twas good for me, that I was afflicted, &c.* As a Pleuretick Perſon is ready to dye when he ſees the Surgeon and Lancet, who notwithſtanding finds eaſe whilſt the Blood runs, and afterwards rejoyceth that 'tis done. Therefore let me entreat you that fear the Lord, to en-

deavour to conceive aright of all the ſeverities of your Heavenly Father; and here I ſhall offer you theſe helps.

(1.) You may be confident, that however he afflicts you, he deſigns not to ſatisfie His Juſtice by any thing He inflicts upon you: and therefore he will not wound you either in Extremity, or to Eternity. When God Puniſheth the Reprobate part of the World, He is demanding ſatisfaction of them; and hence it is, that they cannot poſſibly tell how much, or how long it is they ſhall ſuffer.

But 'tis not ſo with the Saints, their Surety hath fully anſwered the demands of juſtice in their ſtead; and God will not, yea in juſtice cannot require it of the Principal, when he hath already received it of the Surety; and that Jeſus Chriſt did ſatisfie the Father for the Sins of the Elect, is one of the Articles of our Creed; and we are not Chriſtians if we queſtion it. God acknowldgeth it in *Job* 33. 24. as alſo in that he raiſed him up from the dead, and admitted him into Heaven; every Believer therefore may aſſure himſelf, that however God deal with him, He deſigns not to ſatisfie His juſtice upon him, nor intends to give the demerit of his Sins to him.

(2.) Whatever ſad Providence befal you, God intends no proper loſs, or real damage ſhall befall you; no Revolutions ſhall Impoveriſh or Spoil a Servant of Jeſus; for though the Enemy in Perſecution, may take away his Worldly goods, he is no more damnified, than he is whoſe houſe is emptied of worthleſs lumber, that he may come at his Cupboard or Coffers. Though a

Diſtem-

Diſtemper take away his eaſe or ſtrength, he is not hurt, for the Grace he receives inſtead thereof, doth more than make him amends.

Affliction takes nothing away from a Gracious Soul, but what is better miſſed than had; and therefore though it takes all his days he is never the poorer. A Gracious Perſon hath but Three things worth the keeping, and thoſe no Enemy ſhall take away. (1.) His Soul. (2.) His Grace. (3.) His God.

(1.) His Soul; which though it may by Death be ſeparated from the Body; yet ſhall it never be in the hands of an Enemy: I mean, under the Tyranny of the World, Fleſh, or Devil, *for the Lord will redeem the Souls of his ſervants, Pſal.* 34. 22. Tho the Cabinet may by an undiſtinguiſhing Providence be thrown here and there, yet God will take care of the Precious Jewel, That that be not loſt.

(2.) His Grace; which indeed is the only brightneſs of this Jewel; this the Soul ſhall never be totally deprived of. *John* 4. 14. This ſpark is kindled by Heaven, and all the breath of Hell, and Water on Earth ſhall never quench it. God hath ſet this plant, and it will grow in all Weathers, for Almighty Power protects it; whatever a Believer loſes, he never loſes the Image of God; that cannot be loſt.

(3.) His God; Who though he may hide His Face, yet will not deny his Covenant, nor forget that he is the Believer's God by a ſure deed of Gift; all the World can no more deprive a Believer of His God, than they can deprive God of Himſelf, *for neither death nor life*, &c. 1 Cor. 8. 38. now this being believed and conſidered, there is not ſo much mat-

ter of Terror in any Providence to a Soul that hath repented of Sin, and Believed in Christ.

(3.) What Troubles soever come upon you, are in the account of infinite Wisdom needful for you, to the carrying on your Sanctification, and fitting you for the life of Heaven; as you may see in the 1 *Peter* 1.6. *Mark* 13. 7. *&c.* God appoints no Visitation for his People, but what is necessary for them; not but that God could save them another way; for he can make his People perfectly Holy, and take them to Heaven the same instant he converts them; but he hath not so purposed, neither dare we say or think it would be best that he should; that way and method that God hath set for the saving of his People, requires that in this state they be exercised with various afflictions, to fit them for a better. *Acts* 14. 22. What though we cannot see the expediency of such Troubles? must they therefore be needless? God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts, as our thoughts; if he saith they be needful for us, 'tis our Duty as Creatures and Christians to do honour to his Infinite Wisdom, by a chearful compliance with his Providence. Should God stop the course of nature, and give us continually dry warm weather, because we think there is no need of showers or frosts, the World were undone; and as certainly should we be in great want, did God withhold all those evils He inflicts without our Approbation. Christian, firmly believe it, for it is certainly true, That thou never feltest any pain, sufferedst any damage, met'st with any Trouble, underwentest any Persecution, but what was truly proper for thee in thy Circumstances, but what thou didst really want as an hungry Man wants Bread, or a sick Man Physick. And assure thy self, thou nor the Church of Christ shall ever smart under

under any new grief, till you ſtand in real need of it. *For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*, Lam. 3. 33. God delighth not to afflict any of the Children of Men without cauſe, much leſs will he diſquiet his own dear Children, but when he ſees it will promote his Glory, and their Good. This one Conſideration would be of mighty force to quiet our Souls in the moſt diſmal day, if ſeriouſly weighed, and throughly believed by us.

(4.) It may be the Evils you feel or fear. Chriſt Jeſus hath ſuffered before you. Are you poor? So was he without Eſtate or Money, as in *Matth.* 8. 20. *Matth.* 17. 27. Are you deſpiſed? So was he, *Iſa.* 53. 3. Are you dejected in Spirit, tempted of Satan, deſerted of God, perſecuted of Men? Why all this did the bleſſed Redeemer ſuffer before you, *Matth.* 26. 38. *Matth.* 4. 1. *Matth.* 27. 46, *&c.* and is it ſuch an heinous thing that God ſhould deal with us, as he hath with his only begotten Eternal well-beloved Son? Did our Lord and Maſter conflict with Sufferings whilſt in this Life, and ſhall we be offended unleſs we go free? Why ſhould we think it much to pledge Jeſus Chriſt? What, tho it be a bitter Draught, 'tis not deſtructive Poyſon, otherwiſe the Son of God would never have put it to his Lips. We ſhould not have ſuch black thoughts of ſuffering, did we conſider that a God-man was was the greateſt ſufferer on Earth, yea, a greater than any in Hell.

(3.) God hath not laid upon you any Burthen, but what he has tried other Saints with before; and ſo he ſerves you as he ſerves the reſt of his Children, and why ſhould you expect to fare better than your Fellows? *There hath no temptation happened to you, but ſuch*

as is common to men, 1 Cor. 10. 13. And sure this should qualify you, that God hath not singled you out as eminent instances of extraordinary Indignation. Oh! that this may fit us for all God's will, and mould us into an holy Compliance with his Sovereign Pleasure. If God bring the Sword upon us, and destroy us by War, he hath dealt so already with *France*, *Hungary*, *Ireland*, and other Christian Countries; and we are not better than they; 'twill be well for us, if we be not found worse than any of them.

(6.) Whatever Calamity he visits you with, he will mightily support you under, and maintain you in. When God bringeth his People into the Wilderness, he doth not leave them there to make their Party good in their own strength, (if he did, they were undone) but stands by and assists them according to his good word, in *Isa.* 41. 10. *Isa.* 43. 2. And indeed such sweet Experience have the Saints had of God's faithfulness in this matter, that in the midst of their Sufferings, they have forgot where they were, and have been even insensible of Torture, whilst it hath been inflicting. Nay one, when he was let down from the Rack, was even sorry that he was to be tortured no longer.—— And the same promises that were made good to them, are given to you; therefore think not unbecomingly of any Affliction, *For this God is your God for ever and ever: he will be your guide even unto death*, as in *Psalm* 48. 14. Say not you are weak, and shall sink under the weight of your Affliction, for his Power shall be made known, and in him you shall be able to do or suffer all things.

(7.) VVhat-

(7.) Whatever Affliction God doth visit you with, he will exceedingly profit you by, for by it he will convey an encrease of Grace, and fitness for Glory; therefore let it not seem so terrible to you, to be in Poverty, Sickness, Pain, and Persecution, if thereby you may be made more like God, and fitted for the heavenly Glory.

(8.) Whatever trouble God brings you into, he will bring you victorious out of; for with the Temptation he will provide a way for escape, *that ye may be able to bear it*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. Your Tryals, as they are not extream, so they shall not be everlasting, (as before) but either he will deliver you alive or dead; perhaps God will yet spare you to enjoy a Tranquility, and a prosperous State with the Church here on Earth, and give you quiet from your Troubles all round about, according to that in *Joshua* 22. 44. or which is far better, take your Souls to the World of Rest and Peace, where you shall be out of Gunshot, *&c.*

(9.) All your Troubles shall turn to your account in the other World, being managed to the Glory of God by you in this, through the assistance of the Spirit of Grace. God will not forget that Humility, Brokenness, Self-resignation, and Faith, that you exercise under all your Afflictions, but will plentifully reward all another day, *Rev.* 2. 2, 3, 10. God takes notice how the gracious Soul acteth Grace in tryal, and is well-pleased with it, designs it a blessed recompence, so that a state of Affliction should not be thought so terrible by you.

FINIS.

An-

An Acrostical EPITAPH.

Nature defil'd with Sin, harass'd with Pain,
A while dissolved is; I will meet again,
Throughly refin'd, and perfectly at ease,
Freed of all Sin, and cur'd of all Disease.
A hour, the highest Star my Soul is gone,
Nowhere to stay, till to the holy One.
Love and Praise she offers on her Knee,
Encompassed with Heavens Nobility.
I will not be exil'd, Christ shall fetch me thence,
Sound is his Angels, sweet as Heavens Air.
Many a day we both pray'd for this thing;
Now I see enthron'd Heaven's Glorious King:
Nor do I to pray, my Soul doth see
Her Lord, and I expect this Liberty.

The Body speaks.

APPENDIX.

THE Malady of Spiritual Reformation, and the Cure of Christian Liberty, making a Man happy in this World, and in the World to come; Illustrated and confirmed, in the Life and Death of Mr. Nicholas Ley.

ΠΛΑΝΗΘΟΓΙΑ. *A Succinct and Seasonable Discourse of Original Sin, Its Nature, Rise, Growth, and Remedies of Mortal Error. Written some Months since, and now Dedicated for the healing and prevention of the Sins and Calamities, which have lately sprung in this Nation, upon the Hatred of Christ, and his Scandal of Religion, by reviving of the Heresies and Errors of Reformation. Wherein the Pretences of many Brownists, I. Vindicianus Vindex. Being a Succinct but full Answer to Mr. Philip Cary's much and impertinent Exception against Ecclesiæ Legitimæ Fœderis. II. A Synopsis of Ancient and Modern Antinomian Errors, with Scripture arguments and Reasons against them. III. A Sermon composed for the preventing and healing of Rents and Divisions in the Churches of Christ. Both by John Flavel, Preacher of the Gospel at Dartmouth in Devon.*